

HOUSE BILL 2169

By Staples

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 15,
Chapter 2, relative to days of special observance.

WHEREAS, Tennessee has the honor of being the "Perfect 36," the crucial thirty-sixth state to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which granted women the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee legislature was the focus of national attention and was subjected to intense lobbying by persons on both sides of the issue; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Senate easily ratified the Nineteenth Amendment, but the House appeared to be evenly divided; and

WHEREAS, a majority vote in the House was required to ratify the amendment; and

WHEREAS, young legislator Harry Burn from East Tennessee was leaning toward voting against the amendment; and

WHEREAS, Harry Burn made a last minute decision on August 18, 1920, to vote for the amendment, breaking the tie and enfranchising women throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, when he was called to answer for his change of heart, Harry Burn attributed his actions to a letter written by his mother, Febb Burn, urging him to support the amendment; and

WHEREAS, when efforts were made to rescind the vote and representations were made that Harry had misunderstood his mother's intent, Febb Burn urged him to "support suffrage to the end"; and

WHEREAS, Febb Burn's actions demonstrate the power of a single person to influence the course of history; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 15, Chapter 2, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

August 18 of each year shall be observed as "Febb Burn Day" to be proclaimed as such by the governor, to honor Febb Burn's role in the enfranchisement of women. This day shall not be a legal holiday as defined in § 15-1-101.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.